

Food Not Bombs

FAQ



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

EXHIBIT

E(1)

Q1: Does Food Not Bombs get its food from dumpsters?

Food Not Bombs does not get food out of dumpsters. We arrange the collection of produce, bread and other food that can't be sold from grocery stores, bakeries, and produce markets. They put this food to the side and we pick it up at a scheduled time. This way, we build personal relationships with local food providers and are able to collect larger amounts of better quality food with more regularity. In some cities, the groceries and bakeries are not willing to help and we may seek some of our food from dumpsters, but this is not generally the case. Volunteers can show grocery workers the law demonstrating they will not be liable if they donate the food. You can print out a copy of [THE GOOD SAMARITAN ACT here](#).

Q2: When was Food Not Bombs founded?

Food Not Bombs started after the May 24, 1980 protest to stop the Seabrook Nuclear power station north of Boston in New Hampshire in the United States. The people that started Food Not Bombs share their first full meal outside the Federal Reserve Bank on March 26, 1981 during the stock holders meeting of the Bank of Boston to protest the exploitation of capitalism and investment in the nuclear industry.

Q3: Where was Food Not Bombs founded and who were the people that started the movement?

The eight people that started Food Not Bombs lived in Boston and Cambridge, Massachusetts in the United States. Their names are Jo Swanson, Mira Brown, Susan Eaton, Brian Feigenbaum, C.T. Lawrence Butler, Jessie Constable, Amy Rothstien and Keith McHenry.

Q4: How did Food Not Bombs get started?

One of our friends, Brian Fieganbaum, was arrested at the May 24th Occupation attempt of the Seabrook Nuclear Power Station. We needed to raise money for his legal expenses, so we started holding bake sales outside the student union and in Harvard Square. We didn't raise much money. I had a moving company called "Smooth Move," and we moved a family that was throwing out a poster saying "Wouldn't it be a beautiful day if the schools had all the money they needed and the air force had to hold a bake sale to buy a bomber." This gave us the idea to buy used military uniforms at the Central Square Army Surplus Store. So we dressed as generals and propped the poster up next to our bake goods and told people we need then to purchase our cookies and brownies so we could buy a bomber. This caught people's attention and while we didn't raise much money we did reach a lot more people. The First National Bank Project asked us to design a brochure about how the board of directors of the Bank of Boston also sat on the boards of the Public Service Company of New Hampshire that was buying Seabrook Nuclear Power Station and the board of Babcock and Willcox that was building the power station. We were already distributing produce that couldn't be sold from Bread and Circus Natural Grocery so we decided to take some of this recovered food, prepare soup and dress as Hobos and set up a soup kitchen outside the stockholders meeting of the bank with the message that their policies were similar to those of the banks that caused the Great Depression. The night before the March 26, 1981 action we became worried that we would have gallons of soup but not enough people to eat all of it and make it look like a real depression era soup kitchen so a couple of us went to the Pine Street Inn and told the homeless men at the shelter that we would have a protest the

next day at noon outside the Federal Reserve Bank at South Station. To our surprise, nearly 70 people arrived. Soon, business people passing by were sharing food and conversation with the homeless talking about the investment policies of the Bank of Boston and the dangers of Seabrook Nuclear Power Station.

Q5: What is the concept behind Food Not Bombs?

We recover food that would have been discarded and share it as a way of protesting war and poverty. With fifty cents of every U.S. federal tax dollar going to the military and forty percent of our food being discarded while so many people were struggling to feed their families that we could inspire the public to press for military spending to be redirected to human needs. We also reduce food waste and meet the direct need of our community by collecting discarded food, preparing vegan meals that we share with the hungry while providing literature about the need to change our society. Food Not Bombs also provides food to protesters and striking workers and organizes food relief after natural and political crisis.

Q6: What is Food Not Bombs trying to achieve?

Even though we provide meals and groceries to thousands of people, we are not a charity. Food Not Bombs is trying to inspire the public to participate in changing society and focus our resources on solving problems like hunger, homelessness and poverty while seeking an end to war and the destruction of the environment. We are also showing by example that we can work cooperatively without leaders through volunteer effort to provide essential needs like food, housing, education and healthcare. When over a billion people go hungry each day, how can we spend another dollar on war?

Q7: By your current estimate, how many groups are there and how many countries have a practicing chapter of Food Not Bombs?

Our website lists over 500 chapters, but we believe there are many groups that have not asked to be listed. We think there are over 1,000 chapters of Food Not Bombs active in over 60 countries in Europe, the Middle East, Africa, the Americas, Asia, Australia and New Zealand. We are active in nearly 500 cities in the United States and have groups in another 500 cities outside the United States. We have been told that there are over 60 groups in Russia but only have 15 listed. The same is true for many other countries.

Q8: Why do you think Food Not Bombs has become so widely popular?

Food Not Bombs has grown for many reasons. One reason is that people see there is a need. Also, we have provided a simple way for people to get involved by publishing the Seven Steps to Starting a Food Not Bombs Group. Other reasons are that each group is independent; we have no leaders and an agreement that the food is always vegan and vegetarian and free to anyone without restriction; and we are dedicated to nonviolent direct action. Everyone can start a group with their friends and classmates – it does not rely on a famous person or leader. Food Not Bombs is also a simple concept, and because we have no paid staff or directors and the food is recovered, local groups do not need to raise huge amounts of money to operate. Finally, the idea that you can be part of a global network seeking to change society for the better and can use your many interests and skills makes volunteering fun and interesting.

The arrests of Food Not Bombs have inspired many to participate. Also helping are the facts that many bands support Food Not Bombs and that you can find us on the streets in public space; we are visible to people that might never otherwise know how to get active for change until they run into our food and literature table.

Q9: Is Food Not Bombs labeled a terrorist organization by the United States government?

The United States government started to claim we were "America's Most Hardcore Terrorist Groups" soon after we were first arrested for sharing free vegan meals in Golden Gate Park in the fall of 1988 - a year before the end of the Cold War. All we had done was claim we had the right to feed the hungry in protest to war and poverty. Military contractors are worried that we might influence the public to realize our taxes could be spent on human needs instead of war, and that this could threaten their

billions of dollars in profits from arming the United States government. The U.S. government was also concerned that our failure to stop sharing food as directed would threaten their ability to manipulate the hungry by moving food programs to more desirable locations or by threatening to withhold food if the public didn't cooperate with the authorities. Since we will provide food wherever and whenever it is needed, this interferes with the government's ability to use food for social control.

Q10: Why do you think that Food Not Bombs is so controversial?

The government and corporations find our message - that we could redirect the taxes that currently are used on the military to fund things like education and healthcare - a threat to their profits and power. They also worry that our sharing of food with the hungry shows that we can end hunger. They fear that the sharing of food and literature with the message Food Not Bombs in high-visibility locations is an effective way to inspire public pressure for change to our political and economic system. In 2009, two U.S. State Department officials gave a lecture at the Fletcher School of Diplomacy in Medford, Massachusetts comparing the group that shares vegan meals in parks and al-Qaeda; they said the people sharing the food were a greater threat than al-Qaeda because people visiting their meals would be influenced to support policies diverting tax dollars from military spending towards education, healthcare and other social services.

Q11: How does Food Not Bombs benefit people?

Food Not Bombs provides more than free, healthy vegan and vegetarian food. We provide an opportunity for everyone to participate in solving the most important problems facing our world. We empower the public to take action and resist corporate domination and exploitation. We also provide food and logistical support to often marginalized people and social movements by feeding striking workers and their families, people participating at protests, and organizing community projects.

Q12: What ideals does Food Not Bombs spread?

Food Not Bombs supports sharing, respect, peace, cooperation, dignity, a nurturing of the environment, and most of all, optimism at a time when many are in despair. We encourage a "Do It Yourself" feeling of empowerment and a rejection of the need to solve problems through violence - violence of war, violence of poverty and violence against animals and the earth. We show that it is not necessary to waste so much of the food that we work so hard to grow, but organizing a voluntary system of food recovery and redistribution. No one should need to rely on a soup kitchen or charity when we have food in great abundance. We work to end the domination of corporate power and provide access to participation in making decisions that affect our life and future. Food is a right, not a privilege!

Q13: Does Food Not Bombs have a president or headquarters?

No, each Food Not Bombs group is autonomous or independent and uses the process we call consensus to make decisions. We encourage each Food Not Bombs chapter to invite those relying on our food to participate in the regular meetings.

Q14: How much food is wasted?

Americans discard over 40 percent of the food that is produced. 1,400 calories worth of food is discarded per person each day, which adds up to 150 trillion calories per year. The United Nations reported in 2010 that all one billion people that go hungry could be fed by the food that is wasted every day.

Q15: Can I start a Food Not Bombs group in my community?

Yes, you are welcome to start a local Food Not Bombs group. Organize a meeting with your family, friends, classmates and others in the community, and follow the [seven steps to starting a Food Not Bombs](#). Please email us your contact information and schedule of meal and grocery distribution and we will post it on our contact list.

Q16: Do you ever share meat?

No, we never share meat and try to avoid sharing dairy. It is not safe to recover meat as it can make

people ill. We also want to stop the exploitation of not only people, but animals. As part of our work for peace, we do not want to support violence against animals. A plant-based diet is important to protecting the environment and an important way to provide as much food with as little impact on the Earth as possible. Food Not Bombs seeks to introduce the vegan or vegetarian diet to the public. If someone donates meat to Food Not Bombs, we redirect it to a charity willing to serve it.

Q17: Is Food Not Bombs a racist white group.

Food Not Bombs has worked against racism since the beginning. The first collective provided food to the people protected by the Black Liberation Army at Columbia Point Housing Projects in Boston at a time when people of color were under attack by white gangs in South Boston. The first group also organized a multi-racial free concert in Cambridge and provided food to the Mohawk nation in New York. Food Not Bombs has many volunteers from all backgrounds, races and cultures. Most volunteers in Africa are black and volunteers in Asia are Asian, and so on. Food Not Bombs volunteers have even been killed while sharing food because of their work against racism. On November 13, 2005, [Timur Kacharava](#) was stabbed to death by racists as he was packing up the weekly meal in St. Petersburg because Food Not Bombs provides food at anti-racists actions. Several other Food Not Bombs volunteers have been murdered by racists in Russia since Timur was killed. Food Not Bombs also organizes a People of Color Caucus at our gatherings and seeks to include all in the work of ending racism.

This is the statement published by the [People of Color Caucus](#) published the statement: Food Not Bombs activists in Asia are mostly Asian. Our volunteers in Africa are African and volunteers in Latin America are from Latin America.

Q18: Will I be arrested if I help Food Not Bombs?

It is very rare that Food Not Bombs volunteers face arrest. Police have only made arrests in a few cities. Most volunteers have little to no interaction with the authorities. You do not need a permit to share free meals and literature, as it is an unregulated activity between people.

Q19: Is there anything else you would like to add?

Everyone is urged to contact Food Not Bombs to participate. There has never been a more important time to volunteer with Food Not Bombs. The United States government reported that over 17 percent of the people went hungry every month in 2010 and the United Nations is warning of a huge increase in hunger in 2012. U.S. Census data show that nearly half of all Americans struggle to survive. The United States is not alone. The global economy is in crisis. Hunger and poverty are increasing in every area of the world. When over a billion people go hungry every day, how can we spend another dollar on war? Why do we spend fifty cents of every federal tax dollar on the military when millions go hungry and are forced out of their homes here in the United States?



Food Not Bombs

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